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ABSTRACT

A study was conducted to determine whether there is an identifiable coping personality related to academic achievement and retention for black college students. Low coping students were also taught coping strategies to determine whether mastering academic requirements facilitates achievement and persistence. The relationship of black student retention and the college's academic/social system were also assessed. The total freshman class of 265 students from a small, private, historically black, liberal arts university was administered the Student Information Form, a self-report battery, during freshman orientation week. The battery was concerned with self-concept of ability, locus of control, expectancy of success or failure, perception of the opportunity structure, coping, and verbal ability. In addition, two versions of a freshman followup form were administered to on-campus returnees and transfers/dropouts. Low and high coping freshmen were also taught coping strategies and study skills and exposed to a network of support groups. It was found that coping strategies were related to achievement and that achievement significantly influenced retention. Students who persisted had learned personality attitudes that gave them a sense of control over events. Additional findings and a freshman student questionnaire and follow-up forms are presented. (SW)

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Coping Strategies: Retaining Black Students In College

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FOREWORD

The Southern Education Foundation and the family philanthropies which preceded it have had a special and continuing interest in the education of black Americans for more than a hundred years. The Foundation has been concerned particularly with programs aimed at increasing and improving higher education opportunities for blacks in the South.

In April, 1974, the SEF Board of Directors established an in-house project, the Higher Education Program, to address issues which were surfacing as a result of the then Adams v. Richardson case. Under this higher education component, the Foundation supported coalitions formed by citizens to monitor state desegregation plans, sponsored conferences and workshops, published papers, monographs and documents, and awarded general grants which focused specifically on achieving equity in higher education in the ten states affected by the Adams case.

In September, 1978, the Higher Education Program proposed concentrating a major portion of its allocation on a Research Task Force which was formed to plan a research agenda for the Foundation and to commission research projects. This body of seven educators has commissioned 17 studies since its inception; this document is presented as the seventh of the research efforts. The first report, A STUDY OF TITLE III IMPACT ON HISTORICALLY BLACK INSTITUTIONS, written by Dr. Cameron Fincher, Institute of Higher Education, University of Georgia, is available to the public at no cost. The following reports may be purchased from the Foundation for $4.00 each: RECENT COLLEGE AND UNIVERSITY ENROLLMENT PATTERNS OF BLACK STUDENTS IN STATES AFFECTED BY ADAMS-CALIFANO LITIGATION, written by Dr. William Brazziel, University of Connecticut, and Marian Brazziel, Mansfield Center, Connecticut; ACCESS, RETENTION AND PROGRESSION OF BLACK STUDENTS THROUGH THE TWO-TIER FLORDIA HIGHER EDUCATION SYSTEM, by Dr. Charles M. Grigg, Florida State University; BLACK EMPLOYEES IN TRADITIONALLY WHITE INSTITUTIONS IN THE ADAMS STATES: 1975 to 1977, by Dr. Anne S. Pruitt, Ohio State University; DETERMINING THE COLLEGE DESTINATION OF BLACK STUDENTS, by Dr. Gail E. Thomas and Dr. Jomills Henry Braddock II; and, FACTORS RELATED TO THE POST-BACCALAUREATE CAREERS OF BLACK GRADUATES OF SELECTED FOUR-YEAR INSTITUTIONS IN ALABAMA, by Dr. Rhoda Barge Johnson.

Copies of this report and subsequent publications will be available at a cost of $4.00 each.

Thank you.

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COPING STRATEGIES: RETAINING BLACK STUDENTS IN COLLEGE

by
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Final Report of Research
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The Southern Education Foundation
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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

Background

For every 10 students who enter college, only four will graduate four years later from that college. The fifth one will require additional years in order to graduate. Of the other five students who dropped out, eventually two will re-enroll in other schools and finally receive a college degree (Pantages & Creedon, 1978). The situation is even more distressing if one examines black attrition rates exclusively. Black students on both black and white campuses drop out at high rates, particularly in nontraditional fields for blacks such as in medical and dental schools. While Odegaard (1979) reports that minority enrollments are up in business schools, the issue of retention is often the more crucial question. In engineering, blacks comprise only 4.9% of freshmen, but only 1.9% of these complete programs and receive degrees (Change, Oct. 1979). Retention is more difficult in mathematics and the sciences because of the importance of strong secondary school foundations in these disciplines.

Despite extensive literature, much is unknown about dropouts in higher education for all students. However, there is an abysmal lack of information regarding the

relationship between race and dropouts. The Institute for the Study of Educational Policy at Howard University (1979) states that poverty and educational deprivation bear directly on persistence for black students. Reviewers of research in this area have suggested that of the studies done, many have failed to examine the interfacing multiple variables which affect attrition. As Jex and Merrill (1962) point out, all too frequently an investigator has adopted an ex post facto approach using college records as a tool for understanding causes for withdrawal. These researchers, as well as more recently Tinto (1975) and Wright (1979), have emphasized the need for a research design which permits understanding of the interaction of factors which contribute not only to dropping out but also to staying in.

Empirical studies have provided some data which can be utilized in studying black students. Pervin, Reik and Dalrymple (1966) found that significant personality and attitudinal differences existed between college persisters and college dropouts. Vaughn (1968) suggested that dropouts tended to be more impulsive than persisters, lacked in depth emotional commitment to education and were unable to profit much from their past experiences.

Many previous studies have demonstrated that a student's academic achievement is positively related to whether he or she continues in school. However, recent research shows that this is not the only variable influencing attrition since there is a higher than predicted

attrition rate among scholastically high-achieving students (Astin, 1973). Poor grades are not sufficient in and of themselves to cause attrition, but must be coupled with non-intellective factors. Summerskill (1962) documented motivation as a major factor. Recently as investigators have expanded their research into nonintellective areas, Rossman (1970) discovered findings which may have greater relevance for black students. He found that moderate commitment to a particular college along with high academic competence characterized persisters as compared to dropouts who have low competence and low commitment. The extent to which an institution can facilitate commitment on the part of its black students could be a contributing factor to persistence. This may provide a partial explanation as to why predominantly black colleges have a lower attrition rate.

Persistence, then, can be conceptualized as an outcome not only of personal characteristics, but also as a result of a process of interactions within the academic social system of the college. Scott (1971) and Spady (1971) found that it was the individual's perception of his integration into the social system of the college that most directly related to persistence. Dropouts perceived themselves as having less social interaction than college persisters. Dropping out, then, appears to result at least partially from a lack of congruence between the individual and the social climate of the institution.

Pandey (1973) conducted a dropout study with 350 students (219 whites and 131 blacks) on an integrated university campus in which he compared the scores obtained from the 16 Personality Factor Questionnaire by students in three academic categories: good, dropout, and probationary. His results showed that both students in good standing and dropouts were intelligent, conscientious and of high super-ego strength. However, the good students were humble and submissive while the dropouts were assertive, stubborn, and independent. The latter characteristics also described students on probationary status, with the difference that dropouts were more intelligent and of stronger superego strength. He suggested that "rap" sessions for potential dropouts might be beneficial.

Williams (1971), in a study of the effect of group counseling on academic performance and persistence of black college freshmen, found that those exposed to the group counseling treatment showed significant improvement in academic performance but not in persistence in college.

It appeared clear that in the light of the present state of research in this area that what was needed was a study designed to look not only at those who drop out but also those who overcome handicaps, persist and continue in higher education. This approach should be based on a multi-dimensional conceptual framework which includes personality/ expectational variables, achievement variables, as well as social interactional variables.

In a previous research study of black college students, the investigator (Abatso, 1979) examined personality variables associated with academic achievement and behavioral attempts to master the expectations, demands, and roles inherent in academic life. Prior research has shown that although additional factors are involved, at least a satisfactory level of academic achievement must be maintained if students are to persist in higher education. In the Abatso study, three variables, verbal ability, perception of the opportunity structure, and coping behavior significantly discriminated between high and low achievers. Freshman entry level verbal ability, positive outlook regarding their chance in the opportunity structure and high academic coping behaviors characterized high academic achievers. Significant group differences in academic coping for black students were based upon a set of personality variables which related to how students viewed themselves academically and their sense of personal control over events which affected their lives. The variables, self-concept of ability and locus of control, contributing to the set are variables resulting from learning and social impact. Academic self-confidence and a sense of personal autonomy have been shown to be related to a person's level of behaving purposefully and decisively toward the fulfillment of his or her goals which, in brief, is the essence of healthy coping. Coping strategies of both high and low copers revealed that qualitatively and quantitatively

different behaviors were used when responding to the academic expectations and demands of college.

Purpose of the Study

This research study building upon previous studies was designed to answer three interrelated inquiries:

1. To discover if there existed a coping personality, that is, identifiable personality traits, expectations, and attitudes related to higher academic achievement and to retention for black college students. Conversely, it sought to verify whether there were personality correlates associated with lower academic achievement and attrition. Fundamental to this inquiry was the hypothesis that academic achievement was a mediating factor in retention for black students. That hypothesis was examined in the data analysis.

2. To discover if the teaching of coping strategies relevant in the process of mastering academic requirements facilitated achievement and persistence for black students in higher education. The question of whether college students in the young adult developmental period can incorporate and apply new academic behaviors has importance for policy makers and administrators of supportive services.

3. To discover if there are patterns of interaction between black students and the academic/social system of the college which are associated with higher retention for blacks. Since personal attributes account only partially

for persistence and attrition, the environment of the college was explored using the black student's perception of the college environment as a frame of reference. Interaction with various aspects of the institution was assessed in an attempt to understand the way in which involvement with various components of the university environment affected the retention behavior of black students.

Lazarus (1974) proposed a model for understanding the coping process which involves a dynamic, cognitively mediated process in which coping behavior is based upon situational outcomes and self-appraisal in relation to an immediate threat, opportunity, or environmental demand for mastery.

Lazarus and his associates contend that three aspects of appraisal must be distinguished when seeking to understand coping. Appraisal is the process by which the potential outcome of a situation and the coping efforts adopted by the person to deal with it are judged or evaluated. The appraisal processes are a function of the interrelation between the individual's personal disposition and belief system as well as the immediate situation.

Primary appraisal concerns a judgment of the possible threat of a situation's outcome. Secondary appraisal is an assessment by the individual of the range of coping options through which the situation can be mastered. Reappraisal refers to any change in the original perception based on changing or new external or internal conditions. Both

productive and unproductive coping behaviors are products of this mediating perception of expectancies.

This model seems most appropriate in understanding the behavioral dynamics of members of racial minority groups because it takes into account not only self-judgment but also an expectancy as to whether the immediate environment will be responsive to even one's best effort. The academic coping efforts a student exercises result from judgments related to answering the appraisal questions:

1. What will happen in this situation?
2. What is required for success?
3. Do I possess what is necessary for mastery?

Within this conceptual context, the following hypotheses were proposed:

1. There is a personality syndrome associated with high academic coping for black college students consisting of the following personality variables: self-concept of ability, locus of control, and expectancy of success and failure which will be the most important discriminators, in that order, between high and low copers.

2. The teaching of coping strategies to an experimental group will lead to higher achievement and retention as compared to that of a control group.

3. High achievement along with positive interaction with the college environment will contribute to a discriminating function which distinguishes students who persist in college from those who drop out.

Research Design

The research plan consisted of a longitudinal in-depth survey as well as an experimental design. Since the highest rate of attrition occurs after the freshman year, entering students were the focus of the study for a period of sixteen months. The entire freshman class of 265 students from a small, private, historically black liberal arts university was administered self-report battery Number I during freshman orientation week. The battery consisted of the following variables and instruments:

I. Student Information Form

Assessed the following personality variables and collected background, education and demographic data.

A. Self-Concept of Ability (Brookover Self-Concept of Ability Scale, 1965)

This is an individual's subjective feelings about his academic abilities. It is one's perception of his own ability to perform academic work competently. Brookover (1967) and Epps (1969) demonstrated a positive relationship between self-concept of ability and achievement with high school students.

B. Locus of Control (Gurin's Adaptation of the Rotter Internal/External Locus of Control Scale)

This variable refers to an individual's sense of personal control in relationship to his

environment. The concept of internality or externality relates to whether one believes he personally has impact on what happens to him and his environment or whether it is determined from outside of himself. This is Rotter's (1966) concept as refined by Gurin (1969) who recognized the component of personal control related better to academic performance for black students.

C. Expectancy of Success and Failure (Mehrabian Achievement Motivation Scale, 1969)
This is a behavior disposition based on Atkinson's theory of achievement motivation which differentiates between high and low achievers. Specifically, "high achievers have more positive feelings aroused by success than they have negative feelings aroused by failure; whereas, low achievers have more negative feelings aroused by failure than they have positive feelings aroused by success" (Mehrabian, 1968). The Mehrabian Achievement Motivation Scale for Males and Females (1969) used in this study has been used with black college students by Weston and Mednick (1970).

D. Perception of the Opportunity Structure (Landis & Scarpitti Awareness Scale of Limited Opportunities, 1965)

It is a concept based on an individual's perception of whether the opportunity structure is open or closed to him. It refers to perceptions related to educational opportunities and attainment as well as access to occupational openings and achievement. Epps (1969) found a positive relationship between belief that the opportunity structure is open and high achievement.

E. Coping (Student Information Questionnaire - Part II, Abatso , 1980)

This variable was operationalized as behavior related to how a student attempts to master the academic demands of the classroom; namely, the conditions which he sets up and the ways in which he attempts to learn and study. This instrument was designed by the investigator as part of her dissertation research. Validity studies and scorer reliability correlations were made with a similar population of black college freshmen. The instrument consists of a set of situational "if, then" open ended questions designed to assess on the behavioral level what students actually do in an effort to achieve. It was analyzed by content analysis using coping criteria taken from Haan (1963). These are elaborated upon in Chapter Two of this report.

F. Verbal Ability (California Achievement Test, Form 19, Vocabulary and Reading Comprehension) This refers to a student's knowledge of words and his ability to understand written language.

Forced choice responses for the personality variables were scored according to the standard procedures for the instruments from which these items were taken. Directions for scoring the coping instrument as well as validity and reliability information for the instruments are available from the investigator. All of the instruments in this battery have been used by other researchers with black college students.

The following two personality variables, while not hypothesized as crucial to this inquiry, based on recent previous research or theory were included for two reasons: (1) the possibility that these constructs might shed understanding on the coping personality, and (2) the often conflicting findings regarding self-esteem among black students.

Self-esteem--an individual's generalized feelings of worth or value. Rosenberg (1971) measured this concept in his work on black and white self-esteem.

Conformity--refers to a disposition to submit, agree, or comply with existing practice. It was used in Epps' (1969) study of family and achievement with black high school students.

A second self-report form was given to the 1980 freshman cohort of 265 students at the start of the sophomore year.

II. 1980 Freshman Follow-Up Form

This questionnaire was designed by the investigator with the assistance of the statistician for the purpose of collecting retention data and college environment information. The multiple choice questions had been used in a follow-up study of black medical students.

It included two versions, one for on-campus returnees and another version for those who either transferred or dropped out of school. The form examined through the perception of students their sense of academic/social involvement on campus. Chapter Three of this report elaborates on the areas of campus life assessed.

A. Retention Status Groups

This variable was conceived of as consisting of three groups: those students who reenrolled at their university for the sophomore year, those students who had transferred to another institution of higher learning, and those students who were no longer enrolled in higher education.

B. Achievement

This variable was measured by the student's total grade point average on a four-point scale at the end of the freshman year or at the time of dropping out. It was obtained through the follow-up form by self-report and college records.

III. The experimental component of the study related to hypothesis two was designed to determine if the teaching of

coping strategies would improve achievement and retention for those identified early in the freshman year as low copers.

The coping instrument, Student Information Questionnaire - Part II, administered during freshman orientation week had identified three coping groups: low, middle, and high. The coping construct was conceived of as a continuous variable. The total responses to all questions were analyzed as a group on a three point scale for each of the five coping criteria listed in Chapter Two. The maximum score possible was fifteen points. An average was calculated for a total score. The continuum was divided into three quantitatively equal divisions and the three coping groups fell into the following predetermined categories:

Low copers .....1.0 - 1.6

Middle copers.....1.7 - 2.3

High copers.....2.4 - 3.0

From among the group of students scoring between 1.0 and 1.6 on the instruments, an experimental and control group of twenty each were randomly selected matched by sex. The experimental group was exposed to twelve one hour weekly sessions of intervention which will be described in Chapter Four. The control group did not receive any treatment. The coping instrument was given to both experimental and control groups at the end of the treatment period.

Data Source

The population consisted of a total of 265 black college freshmen, of whom 195 were females and 70 were males. Their ages, employment, and background status were representative of the wide spectrum of black students who enroll in college (Table 1). Over 20% stated they were preparing for a career as a physician, while approximately 20% stated becoming a lawyer or business executive as their goal. There were 7.5% who aspired to become engineers. Over 60% received some form of federal grants and/or loans. Family members, particularly parents, were indicated by students as the major influence in their attending college. Approximately 70% expressed the intent of going to graduate school.

Geographically, students from the following regions were represented in the population: South, 96; Northeast, 75; Midwest, 67; Far West, 24; and foreign, 3. The distribution of coping groups was as follows: low copers, 155; middle copers, 59; and high copers, 51. (See criteria for coping categories in Chapter Two).

Of the 265 students in the population, 64% returned and 36% did not return for the sophomore year (Table 2). A higher percentage of males persisted in their higher education than did females, although the difference was not statistically significant.

Table 1

Basic Demographic Characteristics of the Study Population

Variable	Categories	Frequencies	Percent
Sex	Males	70	26.4
	Females	195	73.6
Age	17-19	260	98.1
	20-22	1	.4
	23-25	1	.4
	26+	3	1.17
Race	B/A American	261	95.8
	Carribean L/A	1	.47
	African	3	1.17
	White	-	-
Marital	Single	261	98.5
Status	Married	2	.8
	Sep. or Div	-	-
	Widowed	-	-
	Missing	2	.8
Employment	Yes-full-time	1	.4
	Yes-part-time	12	4.5
	No	250	94.3
	Missing	2	.8
Academic	BA, BS, etc.	38	14.3
Intentions	MA, MS, etc.	61	23.0
	Ph.D. or Ed.D	50	18.9
	MD, DO, DDS, DVM	72	27.2
	LL.B. or J.D.	21	7.9
	B.D.	1	.4
	Special Certificate	4	1.5
	Missing	18	6.8

Table 2

Retention Status by Sex

Retention Status	Male N	Male %	Female N	Female %	Total N	Total %
Returned	47	68	121	62	168	64
Not Returned	22	32	75	38	97	36
Total	69	100	196	100	265	100

Chi-Square = 0.92 with D.F. = 1, P $>$ .05

CHAPTER TWO

A Coping/Retention Personality

A stated objective of the study was to discover if there existed among this class of black college freshmen identifiable personality/expectancy variables distinctly related to high coping and perhaps indirectly to achievement and retention. These personality/expectancy variables were not hypothesized to be directly related to college achievement and retention because they represented early entry dispositions assessed during the freshman orientation rather than those acquired during the school year. Coping was operationalized as behavior related to how a student attempts to master the academic/emotional demands of college, namely the conditions which he or she sets up and the ways in which he or she attempts to learn and study. High coping was indicated by evidence of the following properties taken from Haan (1963):

1. Behavior involves choice and it is flexible and purposive.

2. Behavior is pulled toward the future and takes account of the needs of the present.

3. Behavior is oriented to the reality requirements of the present situation.

4. Behavior involves secondary process thinking (rational, problem solving) and is highly differentiated in response.

5. Behavior operates within the organism's necessity of "metering" the experiencing of disturbing affects; thinking which recognizes that the individual must take some positive action to eliminate or prevent disturbing feelings resulting from failure.

The coping instrument was designed in a manner which permitted students to explain in their own language their attempts to cope with academic demands and to report their problem-solving processes and strategies. Their responses were analyzed using the five coping criteria stated above. Three coping groups, low, middle, and high were established.

The low and high groups differed both quantitatively and qualitatively in the strategies they reported using. Qualitatively, low copers not only used fewer strategies but frequently utilized individual action without soliciting the aid of others when confronted with academic difficulty. They reported minimal or no contact initiated with instructors of classes in which they were having difficulty. A frequent response to receiving poor grades was to "shake it off and make an A next time" without suggesting a concrete workable plan for accomplishing that objective. Because study schedules were not adhered to, they admitted that all time management attempts were abandoned and they simply studied when they felt like it. In spite of this,

low copers held to unrealistic grade expectations thereby setting themselves up for intense disappointment.

In contrast, high copers had a larger repository of specific strategies available from which a selection could be made depending upon the demands of the situation. In reflecting more of the coping properties, they reported more problem solving behavior, greater initiative and active engagement of the environment, frequent contact with teachers, and greater use of available assistance and resources. Neither group showed much familiarity with the productive use of group study.

There were no significant differences between the three coping groups in their expectations as evidenced by their initial freshmen expectancies about achievement, rank in class or expectation for advanced degrees. Neither was there a significant difference between the coping groups on the Mehrabian Instrument of N achievement motivation. However, there was a significant difference of $< .05$ between low and high copers as the Verbal Ability Scale of the California Achievement Test, indicating that students with higher verbal ability were also higher copers. Given differences in verbal ability and knowledge about study advice, all students, including low copers, shared similar expectancies about academic performance and educational aspirations. Clearly this was unrealistic for low copers. In fact, the low copers had the highest expectancies about rank in class and expectation for advanced degrees, followed by the high

copers and then the middle copers. As seen in Table 1 of the population description, this cohort of students all expressed very high expectations and aspirations.

It was hypothesized that the personality variables discriminating between high and low copers would consist of self-concept of ability, locus of control, and expectancy of success and failure in that order. The hypothesis was supported only in part. Locus of control was a significant discriminator with high copers having a greater sense of internality about the events in their lives. The other personality variables were not significant. Instead, self-esteem, conformity, and perception of the opportunity variables prove to be discriminators between the low and high copers. Neither group had very low self-esteem, were excessively conforming or perceived of the opportunity structure as extremely closed. Nevertheless, there were significant differences between the high and low copers' personality attitudes in that high copers had a higher sense of self-esteem. This is an interesting finding because often there is relatively little differentiation in global self-esteem among black students upon entry into the same college.

These same low copers expressed hope for the highest academic performance and more advanced degrees. This apparent discrepancy may indicate internalization of the necessity for education and advanced degrees as an instrument of upward mobility and quality of life they desire, but

it also includes the uncertainty of one's capability of obtaining it. The low copers were more external in their locus of control, indicating the importance of external factors in shaping outcomes and events. It may be that these low copers compensate for their lower self-esteem by espousing excessively high expectations. Since they also hold to a more closed view of the opportunity structure, these attitudes combined with higher externality and greater conformity mediate feelings of self-esteem resulting in a lower sense of adequacy and self-satisfaction.

On the other hand, the high copers' responses were more consistent throughout, expressing high self-esteem and a sense of autonomy over their lives, less need to conform and generally viewing the opportunity structure as more open to them. With one exception the high copers perceived the openness of opportunities; they viewed females as having more limitations in the opportunity structure facing them than the low copers perceived. It appears that the high copers were capable of viewing the opportunity structure from the position of both race and sex; whereas the low copers saw the limitations only in relationship to ethnic status (see Table 3).

The coping construct was investigated as a means of better understanding the contributing factors to retaining black students in college. Coping was conceived of as contributing to achievement and high achievement to retention. Therefore, the personality variables were also

Table 3

Group Means, Univariate F-Tests, and Standardized Discriminant Function Coefficients for Low and High Copers

N = 190

Personality Variables	Group Means				Standardized Discriminant
	Low Copers	High Copers	F Ratio	Significance	Function Coefficients
Self Esteem	4.37	4.81	3.28,	$< .05$	-.2601
Conformity	3.62	4.19	3.39,	$< .05$	-.3843
Locus of Control	1.84	1.43	2.54,	$< .05$	.0220
Self Esteem	1.94	1.62	2.55,	$< .05$	.2428
Perception of* Opportunity Structure a	4.35	4.67	1.85,	$< .10$	-.1843
Perception of Opportunity Structure b	3.91	4.33	2.64,	$< .01$	-.4072
Perception of Opportunity Structure c	3.43	2.86	4.07,	$< .01$	.5560
California Achievement Verbal Ability	6.57	7.48	2.34,	$< .05$	-.1914

*Refers to an individual's awareness of limited or open opportunities available to him individually and occupationally.

correlated with final grade point average at the end of the freshman year. One item in the set of self-esteem variables had a significant relationship of $< .05$ with grade point average.

The group's initial academic expectancies, assessed by the Brookover Self-Concept of Ability Scale which consisted of expectancies about grade point average, class rank, and advanced degrees were strikingly different from their actual final grade point averages (see Table 4). They provide evidence for perhaps one of the most important areas of intervention. This lack of realism can perhaps best be moderated by providing factual knowledge along with supportive assistance on the strategies for behavioral change.

An analysis of variance was also done of retention status and the personality variables. Only four items from the set of personality variables were significantly different among the three retention status groups--Not Enrolled, Transferred, and Still Enrolled. Three of those items were locus of control--both personal and system control. Students still enrolled had more internality consistently, followed by those not enrolled anywhere and those who transferred had the least amount among the groups. Item 39 had an F value of 3.27, $P < .05$, Item 41 - F value, 3.47, $P < .05$, and Item 45 - F value 3.59, $P < .05$. The transferred students, exhibiting the greatest externality were more oriented or dependent on external school related factors. The fourth item, conformity, had an F value of

Table 4

Correlations Between Final GPA and Selected Items From the Brookover Self-Concept of Ability Scale

N = 133

Variable	Correlation Coefficient	Significance
Expected GPA and Expected Rank in Class	0.620	$P < .01$
Expected GPA and Expected to do Advanced Work	0.211	$P < .01$
Expected GPA Final GPA	-0.095	$P > .10$
Expected Rank in Class and Expected to do Advanced Work	0.236	$P < .01$
Expected Rank in Class and Final GPA	-0.095	$P > .10$
Expected to do Advanced Work and Final GPA	-0.113	$P \leq .10$

3.68, $P < .05$ with students not enrolled preferring conformity least, transfers preferring it most, and students still enrolled in the middle. Dropouts, combining some internality and little conformity, may display personality dispositions more vulnerable to attrition.

CHAPTER THREE

Academic/Social Interaction on Campus

The literature on retention includes little on the pattern of interaction with various components of the campus and its influence on attrition. Because of the increased awareness and uncertainty of social response for black students, their perceptions of the campus environment were explored to see if a relationship coexisted with achievement to influence retention. The follow-up instrument collected data on students' sense of academic, social, religious, and faculty involvement, sense of support from classmates, faculty, and administration as well as utilization of campus resources, financial status, study habits, food and dormitory facilities (Appendix C).

It was sent to the original population in the beginning of their sophomore year in order to determine freshman grade point average, retention status, and perceptions of the freshman year experience. Fifty percent of the population responded to the follow-up mail survey.

It had been hypothesized that retention would be associated with positive interaction with academic/social environment of the campus. Through the use of discriminant analysis procedures, those particular factors of college environment positively associated with retention were

identified as support from the college administration, satisfaction with personal study habits and satisfaction with dormitory and food services on campus. A student's perceived support from the administration was a discriminator between those who persisted and those who dropped out with a significance of $P < .01$ (Table 5). More students who expressed greater satisfaction with the administrative representatives and policy persisted at the university.

Satisfaction with personal study habits also discriminated among the two groups at less than the .05 level. Somewhat unusual was the lack of satisfaction with dormitory and food service as a discriminator ($P < .01$). Students who were less satisfied persisted while those expressing greater satisfaction dropped out. Other school environment factors were not significant discriminators between returnees and nonreturnees.

A discriminant analysis was run on retention status including all major variables in the study--personality/expectancy, achievement, and academic/social interactional variables. Table 5 presents the total set of variables significantly related to retention and withdrawal in this study. One personality variable, locus of control, contributed to this set with returnees displaying an internal locus of control. This sense of control over the events in one's life has powerful influence on retention. These appear to be the people who put greater emphasis upon their own efforts to succeed. Throughout the analyses, high

Table 5

Group Means, Univariate F-Tests, and Standardized Discriminant Function Coefficient for Returnees and Non-Returnees

N = 133

Variable	Returnees	Non-Returnees	F-Ratio	Significance Level	Standardized Discriminant Function Coefficient
V41 Locus of Control	2.43	2.84	2.87,	P <.05	.2081
V 44 Locus of Control	2.82	3.36	3.55,	P <.05	.2629
V45 Locus of Control	3.86	3.52	1.96,	P <.10	-.1513
FGPA	5.12	4.20	7.53,	P .01	-.4741
ADMIN	3.45	3.84	1.97,	P <.05	-.1771
DORM	3.63	3.28	2.84,	P <.05	-.4111
Finances	2.70	2.16	4.39,	P <.01	-.3228

final grade point average characterized the persisters. When dropouts were asked why they did not return, two major reasons emerged: academic problems and financial problems. In the total discriminant analysis, finances, with returnees having moderate satisfaction with the financial status, replaced study habits as a discriminator. Students who had the greatest financial problems dropped out. Those having the fewest problems enrolled elsewhere and those at a moderate level remained at their original college.

Satisfaction with dormitory and food services again separated the groups, with persisters expressing less satisfaction but obviously not leaving in spite of it, and dropouts expressing more satisfaction but not staying because of it. The range for both groups was between sometimes-to-seldom-satisfied on a Likert scale. So even though it emerged as a statistical discriminator, its meaning, if any, is unclear.

Perception of the administration as supportive of a student's academic learning and development also discriminated among the returnees and nonreturnees with the returnees perceiving the administration as upholding and promoting their academic growth interests.

As predicted in the hypothesis, high achievement along with a pattern of campus interaction which perceives the administration as supportive of their growth and development enhanced retention. A moderate level of financial satisfaction is necessary for the retention of black college

students. Satisfaction with physical comforts such as dormitory and food services, while it distinguishes persisters and dropouts, does not appear to have a meaningful role on a historically black campus.

An open-ended request for their comments regarding what provisions were and were not of value to them during the freshman year yielded the following. Students responding to the follow-up study attributed assistance from the following sources in the college environment as helpful aids in their academic performance during the freshman year:

Tutorial services

Involvement with faculty and former students

Remedial laboratories

Individual instructor assistance

Academic and personal counselor

Upperclassmen encouragement and advice

Strong high school background

Study groups

Even though faculty involvement did not emerge statistically as a significant factor, positive interaction with faculty, particularly outside of class, in giving academic assistance was mentioned repeatedly in their open-ended responses.

Factors which students stated hampered their academic performance were:

Different instructional methods from those experienced in high school

Poor advice on course selection

A variety of emotional problems

The lack of relevance of the liberal arts curriculum

Poor study habits

Inability to adjust to the environment

Inadequate high school preparation

Since the question of gender differences relative to retention has been controversial, an analysis of variance by sex was done with the personality/expectancy variables and academic/social interaction variables. Only one conformity item was significantly different between males and females with females showing less conformity - F ratio 4.23, $P < .05$. None of the expectancy variables nor the final grade point average were significantly different between males and females. Both sexes perceived their family support as good, but females felt a higher sense of family support than males. Females also believed after the freshman year that their high school preparation for college had been adequate; males were less certain about that adequacy. Females had a greater sense of classmate support than males. In contrast, males perceived the administration as more supportive than the females. This finding should be explored further since black females outnumber black males on some campuses as in the case of the campus under study. Females were better satisfied with their finances than males. The use of campus resources and commitment to a study group were of borderline significance. Females made less use of campus resources including learning

laboratories, tutors, supportive services, counseling, and administrative offices than males. Commitment refers to level of involvement in a study group. Females, in contrast to males, claimed a deeper commitment to the group, relying upon it for multiple services (Table 6).

Table 6

An Analysis of Gender Differences in

Some School Environment Variables

N = 133

Variable	F Ratio	Significance Level
Family Support*	7.91	< .01
Classmates Support*	8.04	< .01
University Administration Support**	3.88	< .05
High School Preparation*	7.59	< .01
Finances*	4.13	< .05
Campus Resources**	3.47	< .06
Commitment to Group*	3.49	< .07

*Females had higher scores

**Males had higher scores

CHAPTER FOUR

Experimental Study

The experimental and control groups each consisted of 20 low copers randomly selected from among the freshman population of low copers. There were fourteen females and six males in each group. This sex ratio was representative of the freshman population. The experimental group was exposed to twelve weekly one-hour sessions which included instruction, role playing or simulation, discussion of student concerns about any issue relevant to their adaptation to college life, group problem solving and general cathartic release. The control group did not receive any treatment. Both groups took the coping instrument at the end of the twelve week treatment period.

The goal of intervention was twofold:

1. To teach coping strategies and study skills derived from self reports of high copers supplemented with additional strategies considered functional for adaptation to a new subculture. The following references were useful in providing basic information which made up the treatment instruction: Effective Study by Frances Robinson and Coping and Adaptation by G. Coelho, D. Hamburg, and J. Adams.

Specific articles from the above book by Robert White, "Strategies of Adaptation: An Attempt at Systematic

Description" and "Adjustment as Person-Environment Fit," by J. French, W. Rogers, and S. Cobb were useful in presenting a perspective of adaptation that not only preserved students as unique individuals but also permitted them to grow by increasing their skills, options, and autonomy. This rationale for treatment was selected rather than just the more traditional study skills because for low copers, resocialization without the loss of identity represents the critical change necessary for achievement and retention in higher education.

2. To expose freshman students to a network of support groups at their peer level and at the faculty level was the second part of the goal of treatment. Williams (1971) found group counseling combined with academic assistance did not have a significant effect on black college freshmen's retention but did show significant improvement in their academic performance. It was also recognized that the change process desired through treatment had to be approached through both the cognitive and affective domains. The support groups were conceived around the idea of mutual sharing of learning and assistance among participants.

Throughout the intervention, the investigator emphasized a focus on process. Group experiences were designed to assist the students in understanding and participating in a process in order to effectively comprehend, organize, analyze, and apply information. Equally as important for their learning was knowledge of the processes by which

emotional factors influence academic performance, such as dealing with disappointment as well as maximizing and enhancing their personal and social growth. Initial data collection had revealed the high aspirations and expectations of many low copers. Self-insight into their own style of learning was thought to provide knowledge which, with development, could assist students in the change process and in understanding their attitudes toward various courses and instructional styles. Coping, then, was conceptualized as the activation and initiation of problem-solving processes.

The intervention was conducted by two black graduate students, male and female. Both were completing the second year of a master's program in clinical psychology. They were trained by the investigator prior to treatment and met weekly with the investigator in order to plan group sessions under the direction of the investigator. Sessions were attended by the student participants, co-leaders, investigator, and one or two faculty members. The twelve sessions each emphasized the learning of particular skills. Journals were kept by participants in an effort to promote self-monitoring and habit formation. Although self-monitoring as a treatment has demonstrated mixed results in some experiments (Kazdin, 1974), (Van Zoost & Jackson, 1974), Richards (1975) found that college students' study behaviors were significantly improved through a combination of study skill advice and self-monitoring procedures. He speculated that

perhaps part of the success was due to provision within the treatment for information feedback and self-evaluation.

The first session's design grew out of the perspective that academic help would be best received if it initially emphasized the strength rather than the deprivation model. A lecture/discussion was offered on individual cognitive styles which utilized a prepared self learning inventory. It included the variety of ways in which students process information, approach learning tasks, and pace themselves, as well as numerous situational factors which affect behavior. The session ended with greater awareness of unique as well as shared ways of interacting with learning tasks.

Session two previewed some of the topics to be dealt with in greater detail during subsequent meetings. The focus of the intervention on effectively dealing with the academic and emotional demands of college was clarified. Hypothetical problematic situations typically encountered by freshmen at the university they were attending were role played. Discussion aimed at alternative ways of solving the problems followed each presentation. Whereas specific solutions varied, each situation allowed specific adaptation principles to be discussed. This involved such help as learning how to stay in control of emotions, knowing the kind of alternatives students have, expected role of students in and out of class.

Session three was devoted to a workshop on time management. Each participant devised a life-on-campus schedule

which included study times as well as set times for other activities important in his or her life. Session four emphasized the how to of habit formation in the instruction on study schedules, study conditions, and note taking. As in all sessions, assignments were planned to apply and integrate skills taught during the hour.

Session five dealt with the issue of motivation from the perspective of the black college student. Issues such as societal perceptions about black academic performance belief in self, clarification of expectations and commitments, modeling behavior of blacks in similar situations, realities on campus and in the work force facing blacks were discussed.

Sessions six and seven entitled "Coping with Emotions Aroused in Academic Settings" involved the group in a simulated class situation centered around: (1) the return of a mid-term examination with grades ranging from A to F; and (2) the announcement of an upcoming 15 chapter test in which much of the material was unfamiliar. Strategies for defusing feelings of anger and inadequacy were discussed as well as preventive techniques which emphasized utilization of study groups, techniques for mastering content in different disciplines and multiple ways of handling academic deficits.

Session eight represented a turning point in the treatment group. It had been planned as an informal session in which students could completely dictate the agenda reflecting

their own special concerns. Students interacted with each other more directly in sharing concerns in two areas: (1) failing courses, and (2) dealing with boring classes. The discussion led to a consideration of how outside factors and social activities affect academic performance and the importance of a diversified curriculum in becoming an educated person. They focused on what they perceived in some courses as poor teaching and instructors assuming that all students were at the same level. Some students complained that liberal arts courses were unrelated to their major and therefore boring. In general the students perceived the lcous of control as outside of themselves.

Session nine was the high point of the intervention, fulfilling the objective of developing a milieu of support among the low copers. A student entered the session very upset, stated that she was failing a course and felt that she should drop out of school. She requested help from the group. For the first time, the co-leaders took a completely passive role. The students made all the suggestions and did so in a very supportive manner. They interacted as friends, empathizing, encouraging and offering concrete suggestions and resources for help.

Session ten maintained the same high level of participation and was devoted entirely to the discussion of establishing a well functioning social support system for themselves on campus. They freely discussed their perceptions and reactions to other students and various

components of the university. The difficulty of making genuine friends and the loss of previous support systems from home led to each describing his or her present social support system.

Session eleven dealt with course selection and related topics of instructor choice, sequencing of courses and pre-registration. Once again, students took an active role in advising each other, passing along shared information, deadlines for drop/add, and instructor preferences. They anticipated together what to expect in the process of registration. At one point some students took notes on how to pre-register from other students who had talked with upperclassmen on campus.

Session twelve consisted of discussion with two black faculty members asked to share their experiences as students as well as interpret the expectations of faculty.

Twelve weeks fit well into the college calendar, leaving sufficient time for post-testing and preparation for finals. Other researchers had used from eight to sixteen hours of counseling time.

Answers to the two major questions of whether intervention influenced achievement and retention were statistically determined. The findings regarding achievement are found in Table 7. There is a moderately strong positive relationship between precoping and postcoping scores (pre-intervention and post intervention) as indicated by a correlation co-efficient of .60. Postcoping skills have a stronger

Table 7

Correlations Between Coping and Achievement Variables for the Combined Experimental and Control Groups

Precop with Postcop	.60, P < .01
Precop with FGPA	.53, P < .01
Postcop with FGPA	.70, P < .01

FGPA = Final Freshmen Grade Point Average

Precop = Pre Intervention Coping Score

Postcop = Post Intervention Coping Score

*Pearson Correlations

relationship (.70) with final grade point average than precoping early entry skills (.53). As indicated in Table 8, when precoping scores are controlled for, there is still a significant relationship between postcoping scores and whether a subject was in the experimental or control group. This means that the intervention had a significant effect on postcoping skills independent of precoping level. A regression of final grade point average on intervention status controlling for precoping level did yield a significant relationship between precoping level and achievement as shown in the ANOVA table. However, there was no significant difference between the experimental and control groups in achievement after controlling for the effect of precoping (Table 9). Since postcoping skills do have a strong relationship with grade point average, it is speculated that a longer period of intervention is indicated. Exposure to treatment not resulting in a significant effect on grade point average can be partially explained by the limitation of twelve weekly sessions as well as by the time lag in learning a new skill and becoming proficient in the use of the new skill. Williams (1971) had 16 hours of group counseling time. Davis (1978) found in an experimental study of didactic and group counseling techniques that both produced a significant improvement in grade point averages of black college freshmen over fourteen weekly sessions. Her results suggest the value of time in perfecting new skills. In this sample where the trend indicated higher grade point averages for

Table 8

Summary of Regression of Post Coping Scale on Intervention Status* and Pre Coping Scale

(A)

Variables	R	R^2	Regression Coefficient	S.E. (B)	BETA	F
Pre Coping Score	.598	.358	1.16	.22	.59	28.98**
Intervention Status (Control or Experimental)	.744	.553	0.31	.08	.44	16.15**

**F significant at P < .001 Level

Final regression equation: Post Cop = Constant (.048)
+1.16 (Pre Coping)
+0.31 (Intervention Status)

(B)

ANOVA Table

Summary for the Regression Analysis in (A)

Source	Df	Sum of Squares	Mean Square	F
Regression	2	2.795	1.397	22.87**
Residual	37	2.260	0.061	

** F statistic significant at P < .00 level

* Intervention status refers to the combined experimental and control groups

Table 9

Summary of Regression of End of Year GPA (FGPA)

on Intervention Status* and Pre Coping

(A)

Variables	R	R^2	Regression Coefficient	S.E. (B)	BETA	F
Pre Coping	.534	.285	1.721	.442	.534	15.13**
Intervention Status (Control or Experimental	Too insignificant to include					

** F significant at P < 0.001 level

Final regression equation: FGPA = Constant (-.227)

+ 1.721 (Pre Coping)

(B)

ANOVA Table

Summary for the Regression Analysis in (A)

Source	DF	Sum of Squares	Mean Square	F
Regression	1	3.875	3.875	15.13**
Residual	38	9.729	.256	

** F statistic significant at P < .001 level

* Intervention Status refers to the combined experimental and control groups

the experimental group, the investigator speculated that given additional time, a significant difference would exist between the two groups.

The distribution of control and experimental subjects according to retention status was examined by the Chi square statistic. Seventy percent of the experimental group persisted at their university as compared to 45% of the control group. Although the significance level was greater than .05, it represented an important trend particularly coupled with a similar trend found in achievement (Table 10). This lack of significance may also be due partially to some of the small contingency table cell frequencies. Summerskill (1978) states that for all college students about 20% transfer after the freshman year which was consistent with findings in the control group, whereas only 10% transferred in the experimental group.

An analysis of variance was done on postcoping scores and retention status which indicated a significant difference of $< .001$ between the three groups (Table 11). Students still enrolled had the highest postcoping scores, suggesting the usefulness of coping skills developed during the freshman year in retention. Achievement, operationalized as final grade point average at the end of the freshman year, was differentiated best by retention status with a significance of $< .001$ (Table 12). Students still enrolled had the highest grade point average, followed by those who transferred to other institutions of higher learning, and

Table 10

Distribution of Control and Experimental

Subjects According to Retention Status

	Control		Experimental		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Not Presently Enrolled Anywhere	7	35	7	20	11	27.5
Transferred	4	20	2	10	6	15
Still Enrolled	9	45	14	70	23	57.5

Chi-Square = 2.57 with D.F. = 2

P > .05

Table 11

(A) Mean Postcoping by Retention Status for the Combined Experimental and Control Groups

Rentention Status	Mean PostCoping	S.E. of Mean	N
Not Enrolled	1.482	.087	11
Transferred	1.900	.089	6
Still Enrolled	1.970	.066	23

(B) Analysis of Variable (ANOVA) of Postcoping by Retention Status for the Combined Experimental and Control Groups

Source	DF	Sum of Squares	Mean Square	F Ratio
Between Groups	2	1.810	.905	10.318**
Within Groups	37	3.245	.088	$P < .001$

Table 12

(A) Mean FGPA by Retention Status for the Combined Experimental and Control Groups

Rentention Status	Mean* FGPA	S.E. of Mean	N
Not Enrolled	1.673	.189	11
Transferred	2.117	.122	6
Still Enrolled	2.422	.100	23

(B) Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) of FGPA by Retention Status for the Combined Experimental and Control Groups

Source	DF	Sum of Square	Mean Square	F Ratio
Between Groups	2	4.195	2.097	8.247**
Within Groups	37	9.409	0.254	P < .001

* FGPA computed on a four (4) point scale

** F statistic significant at P <.01

dropouts had the lowest grade point average.

Some of the freshman students initially identified as needing study skill advice somehow managed to increase their coping skills, achievement level, and persistence. However, those participants in the experimental group did so more systematically and with guidelines about ongoing processes which hopefully will become internalized and affect their achievement. The regression supports a strong relationship between coping and final grade point average and between grade point average and retention. It is possible, then to speculate that prolonged sessions of exposure to the coping intervention would produce increased achievement and therefore greater change in retention status. The emphasis in intervention on the processes underlying ways of mastering environmental demands may not have yielded all the desired immediate results but do indicate a trend which should lead in time to greater competence and persistence.

CHAPTER FIVE

Summary, Conclusions, and Implications

This study was designed to discover if there existed an identifiable coping personality related to academic achievement and retention for black college students. Further, through an experimental treatment group, coping strategies were improved in a group of students identified as low copers. Specific factors in the college environment as perceived by students were associated with retention and withdrawal.

In conclusion, coping strategies, then did have a relationship to achievement, and final achievement had a significant influence on retention, but in concert with school environment factors which reflected on an institution's highest commitment to its black students--administrative support of their academic growth and development. Students who persisted had learned personality attitudes which gave them a sense of control over the events in their lives. The more a student knew how to interact successfully with his or her college environment, the more one could expect him or her to continue pursuing his or her academic goals, given adequate financial resources.

An important outcome of this study was the finding that many black freshmen enter college with unrealistically high

academic expectations which may be painfully shattered during their freshman year. A check of university records supported the self-report data that academic problems were a major reason for attrition. It also confirmed that differences between returnees and nonreturnees are not due to academic motivation or educational aspirations. Not even verbal ability, a measure of scholastic aptitude, discriminated between persisters and dropouts. The findings suggest specific learned personality/attitudes, study skills, and behavioral strategies which encompass the variety of demands encountered on a college campus as well as a sense of support from the college environment are crucial in retention. It is speculated that patterns of social interaction on campus or in the school environment factors would be of even greater importance for black students on a predominantly white campus. Since these are learned attitudes and skills, intervention at the individual level coupled with campus factors can be implemented for the purposes of retaining black students. Therefore, the following recommendations are made for institutions of higher education enrolling black students.

1. An institution of higher education wanting to enhance the retention of black students should make a commitment to their academic development from the highest levels of the administration to those who represent and translate administrative policy and intent to students, faculty and staff. The commitment should express itself

in a self study of every aspect of campus life which impacts upon black freshmen.

2. That commitment should extend to developing financial resources for those with extreme need who otherwise would of necessity drop out.

3. Intervention programs for those students with predicted academic problems should be inclusive of the following components:

A. A commitment to long term academic behavioral change.

B. It should be initiated early in the freshman year and continue throughout the first year in college.

C. Didactic techniques should be combined with group counseling techniques aimed at establishing support networks for participants. These networks should include peers, older students, and faculty.

D. Content should include not only study advice but adaptive strategies, problem solving processes, and affect management.

E. Students should be given the opportunity to experience the effect of their efforts in controlling their life events in order to promote internality.

F. Intervention should involve informal interaction with faculty and administrators with a focus on academic/campus affairs. Contact and exposure for mutual learning is necessary if school loyalty is to result.

4. Career counseling should be introduced during the freshman year offering information on a variety of career choices, appropriate major, self-assessment techniques, and goal attainment models.

5. The selection of faculty teaching black freshman students should take into account the positive effect of teacher rapport and relationship as an instrument of teacher effectiveness. Since students having academic difficulty often are reluctant to approach faculty, overtures by faculty may assist a freshman in utilizing available campus resources.

The wide gap between expectations and performance experiences by some black students inadequately prepared for college contributes to feelings of frustration and despair which further retard academic achievement and perpetuates unrealistic thinking. Cognitive restructuring resulting from learning appropriate academic strategies and new socialization for a particular college environment can become a means by which expectations can become reinforced or altered.

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APPENDIX A

The 1980 Student Information Form has not been reproduced here because of its length but may be obtained by writing:

Southern Education Foundation
811 Cypress Street
Atlanta, GA 30308

APPENDIX B

NAME _____

FRESHMAN STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRE

Explain in detail how you have or would handle each situation. Be as specific as possible. If extra space is needed, please use the back of the page.

1. If a test were assigned on Friday for Monday morning and you have planned a busy weekend, what would you do.

2. What do you ordinarily do during breaks of more than 10 minutes between classes?

3. Has there ever been a course in which you have had some difficulty? What did you do about it?

4. How did you decide on a major? How do you decide which courses to take? How do you decide which instructors to take when there is a choice?

5. What do you generally do during the class hour? For what reasons?

6. Name one course and discuss how you do about preparing a regular homework assignment for that course.

7. How many times have you consulted with an instructor outside of class?

   a. Why did you see the instructor?

   b. Who initiated the talk?

   c. What was the outcome?

   d. How many different faculty members have you talked with outside of class?

8. Where do you usually study?

   a. During what time period?

   b. Why did you choose this location?

   c. Do you have a study schedule?

      Why or why not?

9. Suppose an instructor presented some new material in class which you found difficult to understand. What would you do?

10. Do you usually study alone? Why?

    a. Are there ever times when you study with someone else?

    b. On what occasions?

11. When an important exam is coming up, what do you generally do?

12. When an assignment or test is returned with a D grade on it, what do you do?

13. When you notice that others in the same course are performing better than you, what do you generally do?

14. How important do you think your present courses are to your future goals? List the ones that you think are most important.

15. List the clubs and activities you participated in this year.

16. What grade point average do you expect to have by the end of the year?

APPENDIX C

Dear Sophomores:

I am surveying your class, the 1980 Freshman Class, in an effort to help us improve our understanding of the needs of Black College Students. Please help by recalling your Freshman year experiences and answer all of the questions completely and honestly. Complete today and return to Dr. Y. Abatso, Teacher Certification Department.

This questionnaire is essential to the success of our study. Thank you in advance for your cooperation. All information will remain confidential and only be used in group summaries.

1980 FRESHMAN FOLLOW-UP FORM

OFF CAMPUS

1. NAME_____

2. PRESENT ADDRESS TELEPHONE

   HOME_____ _____
   (area code) (number)

   CAMPUS_____ _____

3. Are you presently enrolled in a college or university?

   _____Yes _____No

4. What is the name of the university?_____

   (location) _____

5. Why did you select your present university?_____

   _____

   _____

6. If you are not in school, what are you presently doing?

   _____

   _____

7. Why did you decide to return to a college or university?

   _____

   _____

8. Did you complete both semesters of your Freshman year at the university?

_____Yes _____No

9. Why did you leave early?_____

_____

10. Why did you not return?_____

_____

11. What was your total grade point average for both semesters of your Freshman year? (Check one category)

_____ 4.0-3.5	_____ 3.4-3.0	_____ 3.3-2.9
_____ 2.8-2.5	_____ 2.4-2.0	_____ 1.9-1.5
_____ 1.4-1.9	_____ Below 1.0	_____

12. In which subject areas did you have difficulty?_____

_____

13. Was it the quality of work expected or the quantity which casued problems for you? _____Quality _____Quantity

14. Did you develop a group of friends with whom you could discuss your true feelings and concerns?

_____No _____Yes (During which month of your

Freshman year?_____)

15. Please add comments on things which assisted or hampered your academic performance and satisfaction with your Freshman year._____

_____

_____

16. If you were beginning your college career over again, what would you do differently?_____

_____

_____

1980 FRESHMAN FOLLOW-UP FORM

1. With respect to the books required in your Freshman classes:

   _____a. I owned a full set

   _____b. I owned most, but borrowed a few

   _____c. I owned some, and borrowed many

   _____d. I owned a few, and borrowed most

   _____e. I borrowed all the books I used

2. Did you belong to a group of students who studied together?

   _____a. No

   _____b. Yes

   If yes, check all of the following which apply to the study group:

   ___1. provided direction and priorities for my study

   ___2. provided assistance in preparing for tests

   ___3. provided assistance in writing papers and solving problems

   ___4. provided friendship and emotional support

   ___5. increased my motivation to perform well in school

   ___6. involved time but accomplished very little

3. During your Freshman year was your family:

   _____a. very supportive of your effort

   _____b. somewhat supportive of your effort

   _____c. sometimes supportive, sometimes a distraction from your effort

   _____d. somewhat of a distraction from your effort

   _____e. very much a distraction from your effort

4. During your Freshman year:

_____a. I was very active in a church or temple

_____b. I was somewhat active in a church or temple

_____c. I was occasionally active in a church or temple

_____d. I was seldom active in a church or temple

_____e. I was never active in a church or temple

5. During my Freshman year:

_____a. I was very active in social activities, social clubs, fraternity or sorority

_____b. I was somewhat active in social activities, social clubs, fraternity or sorority

_____c. I was occasionally active in social activities, social clubs, fraternity or sorority

_____d. I was seldom active in social activities, social clubs, fraternity or sorority

_____e. I was never active in social activities, social clubs, fraternity or sorority

6. During my Freshman year I felt there was someone I could turn to on the faculty and discuss academic and personal problems.

_____a. always

_____b. often

_____c. sometimes

_____d. seldom

_____e. never

7. Last year I felt that the faculty was supportive of my academic learning and development.

_____a. always

_____b. often

_____c. sometimes

_____d. seldom

_____e. never

8. Last year I felt that the administration was supportive of my academic learning and development.

_____a. always

_____b. often

_____c. sometimes

_____d. seldom

_____e. never

9. Last year I felt that my classmates were supportive of my academic learning and development.

_____a. always _____d. seldom

_____b. often _____e. never

_____c. sometimes

10. Last year I could find a quiet place to study.

_____a. always _____d. seldom

_____b. often _____e. never

_____c. sometimes

11. Last year the dormitory and food services were satisfactory.

_____a. always _____d. seldom

_____b. often _____e. never

_____c. sometimes

12. Library resources were adequate for my needs.

_____a. always _____d. seldom

_____b. often _____e. never

_____c. sometimes

13. My personal finances were satisfactory for my needs last year.

_____a. always _____d. seldom

_____b. often _____e. never

_____c. sometimes

14. My personal study habits

_____a. were always well disciplined and successful

_____b. were often well disciplined and successful

_____c. were sometimes well disciplined and successful

_____d. were seldom well disciplined and successful

_____e. were never well disciplined and successful

15. How involved did you feel in the academic life of the University?

_____a. very involved
_____b. involved
_____c. involved to some degree
_____d. uninvolved
_____e. very uninvolved

16. How involved did you feel in the social life of the University?

_____a. very involved
_____b. involved
_____c. involved to some degree
_____d. uninvolved
_____e. very uninvolved

17. I found the required Freshman Orientation course

_____a. always helpful
_____b. often helpful
_____c. sometimes helpful
_____d. seldom helpful
_____e. never helpful

18. During my Freshman year, I found that my high school preparation

_____a. very adequately prepared me for college
_____b. adequately prepared me for college
_____c. somewhat prepared me for college
_____d. inadequately prepared me for college
_____e. very inadequately prepared me for college

19. With respect to campus resources (check as many as apply)

_____ _____ a. I took advantage of tutorial services
how many times
_____ _____ b. I took advantage of counseling services
_____ _____ c. I took advantage of meeting with faculty outside of class
_____ _____ d. I took advantage of the reading or writing laboratory

19. (continued)

_____ _____ e. I took advantage of meeting with my academic advisor

_____ _____ f. I took advantage of meeting with the financial aid advisor

_____ _____ g. I took advantage of meeting with the administrators--Dean of Students, Academic Dean, President

_____ _____ h. I took advantage of meeting with the personnel in the Registrar's office

_____ _____ i. I took advantage of meeting with other faculty outside of instructors

_____ _____ j. _____
Other Resources (identify)

PLEASE PLACE IN THE ADDRESSED ENVELOPE PROVIDED AND MAIL TODAY THROUGH CAMPUS POST OFFICE!!

Dear Sophomores:

I am surveying your class, the 1980 Freshman Class, in an effort to help us improve our understanding of the needs of Black College Students. Please help by recalling your Freshman year experiences and answer all of the questions completely and honestly. Complete today and return to Dr. Y. Abatso, Teacher Certification Department.

This questionnaire is essential to the success of our study. Thank you in advance for your cooperation. All information will remain confidential and only be used in group summaries.

1 9 8 0 F R E S H M A N F O L L O W - U P F O R M

1. NAME _____

2. Total number of hours completed during your freshman year? _____

3. Why did you decide to return to a college or university?

_____

_____

4. Did you complete both semesters of your Freshman year at the university?

_____Yes _____No Why did you leave early? _____

_____

5. What was your total grade point average for both semesters of your Freshman year? (check one category)

_____ 4.0-3.5	_____ 3.4-3.0	_____ 3.3-2.9
_____ 2.8-2.5	_____ 2.4-2.0	_____ 1.9-1.5
_____ 1.4-1.0	_____ Below 1.0	_____

6. In which subject areas did you have difficulty? _____

_____

7. Was it the quality of work expected or the quanity which caused problems for you? _____Quality _____Quantity

8. Did you develop a group of friends with whom you could discuss your true feelings and concerns?

_____No _____Yes (During which month of your freshman year?)_____

9. Please add comments on things which assisted or hampered your academic performance and satisfaction with your Freshman year?

_____

_____

_____

10. If you were beginning your college career over again, what would you do differently?

_____

_____

_____

Scoring of Coping Instrument

The coping construct was conceived of as a continuous variable. It was analyzed by content analysis using criteria taken from Haan (1963). The application of the coping criteria demanded a high response to the questions. Therefore, the total responses to all questions on the instrument were analyzed as a group on a three-point scale for each of the five coping criteria listed under the instrument description. The three-point scale used for rating is listed below:

1 . . . . . little evidence of coping

2 . . . . . moderate evidence of coping

3 . . . . . high evidence of coping

The maximum score possible was fifteen points. An average was then calculated by dividing by five for a total score. The continuum was divided into three equal divisions and the three coping groups fell into the following pre-determined categories:

Low copers. . . . . 1.0 - 1.6 lowest one-third

Middle copers . . . . 1.7 - 2.3 middle one-third

High copers . . . . . 2.4 - 3.0 upper one-third

To ensure objectivity and coder reliability, the two master level research assistants were trained in the scoring technique by the investigator. A subsample of twenty

protocols were randomly selected from the total and scored independently by each coder. Their ratings were correlated with each other as well as with the investigator's ratings for the protocol. After establishing a high level of interrater agreement, remaining protocols were coded according to the objective criteria developed during the training sessions. Interrater reliability was checked again halfway through the coding of protocols.

Research Team

Yvonne Rollerson Abatso, principal investigator, is an adjunct faculty member at the Langston University Urban Center at Tulsa. She has served as assistant professor of psychology at Fisk University and Chicago City College. Her area of specialization is coping and adaptative behavior. Dr. Abatso holds the Ph.D. degree (University of Chicago) in educational psychology. She has lectured and organized counseling services in parts of the United States, North and West Africa, France and Germany. She has published in the area of adaptive strategies for black urban families. As a research assistant she conducted research under a grant from the National Institute of Education.

Kofi Semenya, statistician, holds a Ph.D. from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. He is presently assistant professor of statistics at Tennessee State University.